

ARLINGTON RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINTUES

February 24th, 2020

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order for a special meeting at The Lyons Hearing Room on Monday, February 24, 2020 at 6:05 pm.

Commission Members: Leslie Mayer, Phil Lasker, Scott Walker, Jen Rothenberg, Shirley Canniff and Sarah Carrier were in attendance. Interim Director of Recreation Bob Jefferson and Assistant Director Erin Campbell were also present.

Members of the Public: Juliet Moir, Kate Leary, Jim Hampe, Don Kalischer, Larry Slotnick, Lauren Sonalkar, Megan Burns and Leah Broder.

Open Forum - N/A

Ms. Mayer welcomed Mr. Jefferson as Interim Recreation Director.

Playground Study – N/A

Evaluation of Document

Twenty playgrounds were evaluated. Ms. White (from Playground Inspections of New England) did not review the playgrounds at Reservoir Beach and North Union due to the current renovations. The multigenerational area at Summer Street was also not reviewed because it is not technically considered a playground. Ms. Mayer and Ms. Rothenberg questioned how Ms. White obtained installation dates. Mr. Walker brought up discrepancies between the Summary Page and Individual Summaries. The playgrounds in question are Stratton, Buzzell, Peirce, Locke, and Parallel. Ms. Rothenberg and Ms. Carrier were concerned that the standards for the evaluation were not defined. They were both also concerned that some recommendations may reflect new standards that are not necessarily applicable to existing playgrounds. Mr. Jefferson said that the Recreation Department will reach out to Ms. White regarding discrepancies and issues which require clarification.

General Approach to Prioritization and Next Steps

Mr. Jefferson suggested that the first step should be for a group from the Town to go through each playground. Using the report as a guide, this would allow them to fix the problems that can be easily addressed and note issues that will require further work. This will include the trimming of any trees necessary while onsite. The Commission agreed that this would be a good first step and will supply a letter giving the tree department permission to do the work needed. A motion was made by Ms. Canniff to grant Mr. Jefferson permission to start the evaluations of playgrounds and make repairs when possible. Mr. Lasker seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0. The Recreation Department will circle back to the Commission once this work is complete. The PRC also suggested that Friends Groups may be able to assist with some minor maintenance.

Going forward, the PRC discussed possible options to consider for the prioritization of the remaining issues. Ms. Rothenberg suggested digging into the renovation category. She thought that there may be opportunities to fix or remove some problems that would not require a total renovation. Ms. Canniff agreed. Ms. Rothenberg reminded PRC that the previous Recreation Director, Ms. Mulroy, had suggested that there may be too many sites for the Town to maintain. Mr. Lasker and Ms. Rothenberg were concerned that town playgrounds at school sites were exposed to extra wear and tear, while limiting the availability for the public's use during school hours. Mr. Jefferson suggested that the goal should be to not take away a playground, but to remove hazardous pieces that

are cost prohibitive to repair. Mr. Lasker was concerned that the report could cause legal issues. Ms. Carrier explained that the report was an evaluation, not an inspection, and therefore would be subject to different legal criteria. The PRC also considered giving a lower priority to Town playgrounds at school sites which had a school playground for renovations that didn't necessarily include a hazard. PRC will continue to discuss the next steps for prioritization once the Town has addressed as many issues as they can and report back.

On a side note, Ms. Rothenberg suggested integrating playground warrantee information with the GIS system. Ms. Campbell will look into adding information for Magnolia and requested that information for North Union be added when it is available.

The PRC recommended that the Recreation Department contact Wayland Recreation, since Nancy White thought they did maintenance well. Mr. Jefferson will reach out and find out the number of playgrounds they have, if they have staff assigned to maintenance, and if they receive funding for the maintenance.

The PRC and Recreation Department both agreed that it would be helpful to have a Town employee as a Certified Playground Inspector who would be able to perform annual inspections. Mr. Jefferson suggested the possibility of having a Recreation Facility Manager absorb that responsibility.

Funding

Possible sources of funding were discussed at this time. Ms. Mayer said that CPA money may be available for renovations but not for maintenance. Ms. Broder suggested block grants. The PRC will revisit the issue of funding once the Town reports back.

Ms. Canniff motioned to adjourn meeting at 7:45. This motioned was seconded by Mr. Walker and approved 5-0 the Commission members.

Respectively submitted by Linda Kirchner

APPROVED 4/14/20 P.R.C. MEETING
